

He Qingfeng, who was stunned, regarded Mr. Yi with bewilderment in his eyes. "Have you gone crazy?" he confronted Mr. Yi.

Mr. Yi flashed him a bitter smile. He was not crazy at all but instead, he only said that because he understood there was no way he could dissuade Han Jingru. A lot of things had happened out of his expectation, and his plan had been totally disrupted due to the fact that he had underestimated Han Jingru's abilities and talents. Now, he knew enough to realize that no one was able to change Han Jingru's mind once he had put his mind to do something.

"Will you be able to stop him from going?" Mr. Yi confronted He Qingfeng.

Instinctively, He Qingfeng thought of what took place at the Central Hall of Four Gates last time.

When Han Jingru threatened that no one was able to stop him from doing anything at that time, He Qingfeng thought he was merely cracking a joke.

Come to think of it now, He Qingfeng agreed that

it was true that trying to stop Han Jingru from doing something was not easy.

“Han Jingru, we’re telling you all these for your own good, you know?” He Qingfeng said in the end.

“Master He, your righteousness and the fact that you’re treating me with so much friendliness despite our rivalry are admirable. However, this is something I’ve made up my mind to do. So, I really hope you can understand and respect my decision,” Han Jingru responded.

At last, He Qingfeng let out a wistful sigh, having no idea what else he could say to dissuade Han Jingru from going on the trip. All he could feel was nothing but frustration at the moment because Han Jingru was as obstinate as a mule.

“When do you plan to set off?” Mr. Yi asked.

“I’ll go tomorrow,” Han Jingru replied.

“What’s the rush?” Mr. Yi wondered.

“In fact, I can’t really afford to delay the trip. I guess the two of you understand the condition in the Restricted Area better than me,” Han Jingru explained.

Mr. Yi nodded his head in agreement. Since Han Jingru had decided to go to the second world, it was better to do it sooner than later. Otherwise, his effort would be in vain.

“Is there anything else we can help you?” Mr. Yi asked.

“Can I have Zhuang Tang and Gong Tian to be at my disposal?” Han Jingru asked.

“Fine. They will work exclusively for you from now on, and they will only follow your instructions.” Mr. Yi then turned to look at He Qingfeng for his approval.

After all, the Apocalypse was not under his sole control.

At last, He Qingfeng nodded albeit resignedly and said, “The Three Halls will grant them a

privilege - they will have anything they request from us in the future.”

“Thank you, Master He. See you tomorrow.”
With that, Han Jingru left.

He Qingfeng kept sighing. It pained him to see such a rare talent like Han Jingru go on a suicide trip to the second world.

“If he stays, I’m sure he will be the keyman of the future development of Apocalypse. Why didn’t you at least try to dissuade your disciple from leaving?” He Qingfeng grumbled.

““For your information, he isn’t my disciple. That’s only your assumption because we’ve never gone through any ceremony to turn our relationship into a master-disciple one. On top of that, none of us can predict how he’s going to fare in the second world. Who knows there’s a chance that he might be able to achieve even greater things there?” Mr. Yi answered.

“I can’t say you’re wrong, but at least he’s guaranteed a promising future if he stays. After

all, the second world is an unknown region, and no one has a clue how the place is like,” He Qingfeng countered.

Mr. Yi, who did not agree with what he said, shook his head.

If everyone played safe and feared to change, he was sure the Apocalypse would be heading to its downfall. Mr. Yi would not have decided to come to the Apocalypse all alone back then if the situation was not so dire.

In Mr. Yi’s perception, the only way to eliminate the hidden threat in the second world was to go there and face it directly.

“The only thing we can do now is to believe in him,” Mr. Yi said.

In the meantime, Han Jingru and Jiang Yingying visited the Bronze rank domain again.

Owing to Han Jingru’s help, Zhuang Tang and Gong Tian had improved their ranks by leaps and bounds. Hence, they were immensely grateful for

his help. At the sight of Han Jingru, they immediately got down on their knees and greeted him with reverence as though he was their parents.

Without Han Jingru's generous help, they would have stuck in the Bronze rank forever and would never have made the breakthrough. Now, they even had enough confidence to fight for the Gold rank in the Qualifying Tournament next year.

Instead of stopping the two from kneeling down in front of him, Han Jingru said, "Would you guys be willing to go Yun City for a task?"

"We'll follow every of your instruction. However, I'm afraid we aren't allowed to leave without being properly granted to do so," Zhuang Tang answered.

"From now on, the two of you will work exclusively for me, and there's no need to follow instructions from others. This is my privilege granted by Mr. Yi and He Qingfeng, and it has already been approved by both the Four Gates and the Three Halls," Han Jingru explained.

Zhuang Tang was surprised to know that the Four Gates and the Three Halls had allowed Han Jingru to form a new and independent force.

Although Han Jingru only had two members under his leadership, the extraordinary privilege was enough to show how much Mr. Yi and He Qingfeng valued Han Jingru.

“If that’s the case, when do you want us to leave for Yun City?” Zhuang Tang asked.

“Now. The two of you will be solely in charge of the safety of Su Yimo and Han Xiang. If they are hurt in the slightest way, I won’t hesitate to kill the two of you when I make it back from the second world,” Han Jingru said coldly.

“Please don’t worry. No one will be able to hurt them unless we are dead!” Gong Tian promised solemnly.

Then, Han Jingru fished out two red fruits and handed them each. “Eat this six months later. The fruit is going to work wonders on improving your skills.”

As Zhuang Tang and Gong Tian had experienced the strong effect of the red fruits before, both of them were psyched beyond words to see the fruits. There was nothing much they could do other than thanking Han Jingru profusely.

“As long as the two of you accomplish your task well, I can guarantee that you guys will become fighters of the Platinum rank in the near future.”

“Thank you so much, Mr. Han!”

“From today onward, the two of us will be your loyal followers forever!”

“Please bear this in mind - just kill anyone who tries to hurt the girls, no matter who they are. Spare no one, even if they are one of the Apocalypse,” Han Jingru instructed.

Gong Tian and Zhuang Tang only rose to their feet after Han Jingru had gone.

Cautiously keeping away the red fruit, Gong Tian said, “Master, it seems like Han Jingru is planning on going somewhere.”

Zhuang Tang immediately reprimanded him, “We shouldn’t make wild speculations on Mr. Han’s plans. Instead, what we should do is focus our attention on the task he assigned to us! Now, go and pack up your belongings because we’re setting off to Yun City now!”

“Yes,” Gong Tian replied.

“Jingru, don’t you think you’re being too generous with them two?” Jiang Yingying only voiced her doubt after they left the Bronze rank domain. Considering the scarce amount of the red fruits they had, Jiang Yingying reckoned it was a waste to give two to Zhuang Tang and Gong Tian.

“That doesn’t bother me as long as the safety of Yimo and Xiang can be ensured,” Han Jingru responded in a level voice.

“But then again, does anyone out there still has the guts to harm them at the moment? Mr. Mo is in Yun City with the girls, and the Apocalypse isn’t likely to send their guys to Yun City at their whims either,” Jiang Yingying queried, feeling

puzzled.

“I’ve learned enough lesson from my past experience to know that taking precautionary measures is a must. Even if the Apocalypse won’t send anyone to Yun City, it doesn’t mean He Xiaoxiao won’t make her move. She’s capable of doing anything if she’s desperate enough,” Han Jingru answered.



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After listening to Han Jingru's explanation, a dangerous glint flickered in Jiang Yingying's eyes. Anyone who hurt Su Yimo and Han Xiang would be deemed as her enemy. Since He Xiaoxiao had the intention of doing so, Jiang Yingying thought it was best to just kill her.

“Jingru, why don't you just kill He Xiaoxiao?”
Jiang Yingying asked in an icy voice.

Han Jingru flashed her a bitter smile without answering her. *There's no way I can kill He Xiaoxiao, the daughter of the head of Three Halls, so easily.*

If I can just kill her, I won't even have to send Zhuang Tang and Gong Tian to Yun City.

Although He Qingfeng had demoted his daughter to the Bronze rank, it did not mean he stopped caring about her. In fact, the decision was nothing but a window dressing to appease the public anger toward He Xiaoxiao after she made that offensive statement at the entrance of the Devil's Cave. As much as He Qingfeng wanted to defend his daughter, there was nothing he could do when

the matter eventually escalated into something rather huge.

“If I didn’t push for it, He Qingfeng would never have demoted his daughter to the Bronze rank. After all, He Xiaoxiao is his daughter and the person he cares about the most. How can I kill her at my whim?” Han Jingru explained.

“But, I’m worried that she will become a ticking bomb which is going to go off anytime,” Jiang Yingying said.

Being able to tell He Xiaoxiao was a vicious and vengeful person, Han Jingru was quite worried too. However, he couldn’t do anything to her if he wanted to maintain a friendly relationship with He Qingfeng. Once he killed He Xiaoxiao, the management of the Apocalypse would crumble, which was pretty much the last thing everyone wanted to see.

“Don’t worry. Other than Zhuang Tang and Gong Tian, Fang Zhan is going to be there too. I guess they should be able to protect the girls well,” Han Jingru said.

Still, Jiang Yingying was unconvinced. After all, their trip to the second world was not like any other outstation trip. If anything bad happened to them, it was uncertain whether they could still make it back alive.

“Jingru, let me go and issue He Xiaoxiao a warning so that she will behave herself.” With that, Jiang Yingying was ready to pay He Xiaoxiao a visit.

Yet, Han Jingru grabbed her shoulder to stop her from going. “Your warning is just going to tick her off. It’s totally unnecessary.”

Jiang Yingying looked distressed. Not being able to solve the issue put her on tenterhooks.

“Look, we should go back and get some rest now to prepare for our journey tomorrow,” Han Jingru urged.

“Fine then,” Jiang Yingying nodded in resignation.

Thinking that Jiang Yingying might still visit He

Xiaoxiao behind his back, Han Jingru reminded her, “You’d better not visit He Xiaoxiao, because that will only intensify her hatred toward the girls. What’s worse, she might end up deciding to harm the girls because of you, even though she might not have such a plan at all in the beginning.”

“I understand, Jingru. I won’t go and look for her,” Jiang Yingying reassured him.

Then, the two returned to their rooms to rest. Han Jingru was heavy-laden with thoughts. After all, he was about to face a whole new world he knew nothing about. Of course, he was apprehensive about the journey, but that was not a reason for him to abort the plan.

“What sort of a place can the second world be?” After some tossing and turning, Han Jingru suddenly threw the question at the little white snake which twined around his arm.

Looking sleepy, the little white snake turned its head away from him, not in the mood to entertain his question.

Han Jingru already got used to the human-like behavior of the little white snake. He knew the snake could understand him, but it was a shame that it could not talk his language.

Early next morning, Han Jingru appeared rather energized despite not having slept a wink the previous night. On the contrary, Jiang Yingying looked tired and haggard.

“You didn’t sleep well?” Han Jingru asked.

Jiang Yingying nodded at him. She could not fall asleep at all as her mind was jammed with questions and thoughts about the second world. She spent the entire night making speculations and imaginations about the place, so she could not calm herself down to sleep at all.

“Jingru, I bet you didn’t sleep well too last night, am I right?” Jiang Yingying asked him the same question.

Han Jingru nodded. Just as he was about to say something, he saw He Qingfeng making his way toward them.

“Master He, did you wake up early because you didn’t sleep well last night too?” Han Jingru asked jokingly.

Wearing a grim expression, He Qingfeng asked Han Jingru, “Are you really sure you want to do this? You know what, staying might turn out to be the wiser choice for you.”

“Please don’t worry about me, Master He. Nothing can change my mind after I’ve made my decision,” Han Jingru insisted.

In response to his answer, He Qingfeng let out a rueful sigh. Much bothered by the possibility that a rare talent like Han Jingru would perish in the second world, he hardly slept that night too. In his view, Han Jingru’s talents would only be put to the best use if he remained in the Apocalypse.

“Young man, there’s no turning back for you once you go on this trip, you know?” He Qingfeng pointed out.

“Master He, how about we make a bet?” Han Jingru suggested with an easy smile.

“Make a bet? On what?” He Qingfeng asked, feeling baffled.

“I’m betting that I’ll be able to make it back alive. If I win that bet, I want the system of separating our people into the Four Gates and the Three Halls to be abolished. How does that sound?” Han Jingru proposed.

Back then, people thought of putting the system in place for checks and balances, so that no one would have absolute control over decisions in the Apocalypse. The system indeed achieved that aim perfectly, but at the same time, it also led to a division among the people. It was the reason why internal strife regularly took place and also why there was a shortage of talented fighters in the Apocalypse.

As the resources were not divided fairly among the people, more often than not the Four Gates and the Three Halls focused more effort and attention on fighting with each other. Naturally, it hampered the development of the Apocalypse.

“Do you know why the system was created in the

first place?” He Qingfeng asked Han Jingru.

“Of course I know. It’s created so that no one could have absolute control over decisions, and so that the entire Apocalypse would not be destroyed by a single dictator,” Han Jingru answered.

He Qingfeng nodded. “Since you know the principle behind the system well, I bet you also understand that it’s basically impossible to remove it.”

“Master He, have you ever thought about the reason why the Apocalypse has been regressing over the years? Although a lot of talented fighters sacrificed their lives in the war that took place a century ago, we should be able to bounce back by now. But, the reality is that we’re now pretty much still the same as we were a hundred years ago. Without implementing changes and reformations, there’s no point for the Apocalypse to go on existing as it won’t be able to achieve anything.”

He Qingfeng took a sharp intake of breath after

listening to Han Jingru's words. As the head of the Three Halls, he understood that Han Jingru was right. However, if they wanted to merge the Four Gates and the Three Halls, they needed a powerful and domineering leader who could have unquestioning obedience from the people.

“Han Jingru, I'm surprised to know that you're ambitious enough to think of having the entire Apocalypse under your sole control,” He Qingfeng remarked.

“Master He, it's about time I set off to the Restricted Area. You may join me if you are free,” Han Jingru said without responding to He Qingfeng's remark directly.

He Qingfeng stood rooted to the spot for quite some time before he jogged to keep up with Han Jingru and Jiang Yingying.

At that moment, He Qingfeng changed his view on Han Jingru again. It was because he just realized that not only Han Jingru was a talented fighter, but he was also shrewd and wise. Perhaps, he could be the right man who had what

it took to lead the Apocalypse to a much better place.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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It was the Restricted Area.

Mr. Yi and his assistant were already there. Other than them, all the fighters of the Platinum rank in Apocalypse, which consisted of around ten men, were there too. Compared to the Apocalypse during its heyday, it was sad to say that they formed a rather pathetic sight. After all, the Apocalypse used to be powerful enough to contend with the second world. But now, it was only a shadow of its former self.

“Jingru, I’m not going to dissuade you because I know you won’t listen. However, I have some tips for you,” Mr. Yi walked up to Han Jingru and said.

Instead of answering Mr. Yi, Han Jingru glued his eyes on the portal to enter the second world. Ever since he reached the Restricted Area, the portal started buzzing and whirring with more intense energy. Besides, he could actually sense the existence of an invisible force which was drawing him to the portal. It was as though someone was summoning him to the second world.

“Since you know basically nothing about the second world, you’d better lie low when you get there. Also, please don’t do anything too eye-catching before you familiarize yourself with the place. Once your identity as one of us is exposed, it’s likely that you will be killed by the people there,” Mr. Yi reminded him.

Instinctively, Han Jingru nodded at Mr. Yi. In fact, he was well aware of the tips Mr. Yi gave him, and he understood that it was best not to draw unnecessary attraction to himself in a place completely foreign to him.

“That’s all I have to say. I hope you can make it back safely,” Mr. Yi said.

Then, Han Jingru cast a thoughtful glance at Jiang Yingying.

Understanding the message in his eyes, Jiang Yingying nodded before leaping into the portal together with him.

Never had anyone thought that Han Jingru would jump into the portal without an ounce of

hesitation. At that moment, consternation was written all over the face of the fighters of Platinum rank.

They were impressed by Han Jingru's courage as well as his decisiveness.

“This young man has no fear for death at all huh,” He Qingfeng commented through gritted teeth.

Mr. Yi broke into a weak smile. “That's because he's ready to sacrifice his life to protect Su Yimo and Han Xiang.”

After a brief pause, Mr. Yi added, “Han Jingru cares a great deal about the safety of the two girls. So, here's a piece of advice for you - keep an eye on your daughter. I bet you know very well how vengeful your daughter can be. If the two girls are hurt because of your daughter, I'm sure you can make a guess as good as mine how dire the consequences your daughter will face.”

“Mr. Yi, my daughter is indeed quite ill-behaved, but I'm sure she can differentiate between right

and wrong.”

“Can she?” Mr. Yi scoffed. “It’s so obvious that she’s too pampered by you to know what’s right and wrong. Don’t you have any idea of the sleazy stuff she has done so far in the Apocalypse?”

“Mind you, she’s my daughter and you have no right to criticize her.” He Qingfeng glared at Mr. Yi with annoyance in his eyes.

“I wouldn’t even meddle with your daughter’s business if this hasn’t got anything to do with Han Jingru. But now, I have a high stake in this matter too. If Su Yimo and Han Xiang end up getting injured or even dying because of your daughter, Han Jingru will wipe out the Three Halls or even the entire Apocalypse. I’m sure you know the mind-blowing rate at which his skill has been improving so far, don’t you?” Mr. Yi countered.

He Qingfeng’s heart gave a lurch. He knew how steep Han Jingru’s growth curve had been through the sparring he had had with him last time. On top of that, he ended up being defeated

by Han Jingru. Thus, he dreaded to imagine how powerful Han Jingru would become if he could make it back from the second world.

Yet, He Qingfeng was adamant that his daughter would not do anything harmful to Su Yimo and Han Xiang. In his opinion, his daughter was only a mischievous person, not a vicious one.

“Mr. Yi, please don’t worry. I know how to handle this,” He Qingfeng reassured.

Mr. Yi shook his head in resignation. It seemed to him that he needed to make himself even clearer in order to make He Qingfeng realize what sort of person his daughter really was. Otherwise, He Qingfeng would still live in the illusion in which his daughter was an innocent and sweet little girl.

“I was told that He Xiaoxiao had already sent some of her men away from the Apocalypse to an unknown destination. It’s not hard to guess where they could be heading to,” Mr. Yi revealed.

“Mr. Yi, don’t you think it’s inappropriate of you to make such a groundless allegation on my

daughter?” He Qingfeng glowered at Mr. Yi.

“You just need to do some checking to know whether what I said is groundless or not.

However, if you aren't going to do anything to stop your daughter, I will have no choice but to intervene.” With that, Mr. Yi turned around and walked away. That was all he had to say, and it was up to He Qingfeng to decide how to deal with it.

Judging from Mr. Yi's somber tone, He Qingfeng reckoned that his allegation was not groundless.

Besides, there was no reason for Mr. Yi to deliberately vilify his daughter too. Therefore, he rushed his way to the Bronze rank domain immediately after Mr. Yi left.

If it was true that He Xiaoxiao had dispatched her men to attack Su Yimo and Han Xiang, he had to demand her to abort the mission before it was too late.

In spite of being the head of the Three Halls, he was humbled by Han Jingru's presence because He Qingfeng was a much less inferior fighter

than Han Jingru. On top of that, no one could predict how much stronger Han Jingru would emerge in the future. If Su Yimo and Han Xiang were hurt or even killed because of He Xiaoxiao, Han Jingru's wrath would drive him into destroying the entire Apocalypse!

The energy field around the portal to the second world became as calm as a pool of still water after Han Jingru and Jiang Yingying leaped into it.

In the meantime, Han Jingru was flying and floating through the space tunnel. The pressure inside the tunnel was so strong that it could nearly crush his body into pieces. After only God knew how long, he passed out immediately the moment he ceased to feel the pressure.

When Han Jingru regained his consciousness, he found himself wearing a red robe, the kind people only wore on festive occasions. The room he was in was decorated in a very ancient and old-fashioned style. At that moment, he had a feeling that he had traveled back in time to ancient times.

There was a full-length mirror made of bronze in the southeast corner of the room. When Han Jingru walked up to the mirror to check his reflection, he found much to his astonishment that he was actually wearing what seemed to be a wedding suit!

Looking puzzled, Han Jingru had no idea what was going on. Just as he wanted to leave the room to search for some clues, the door to the room was pushed open from outside. Then, a woman wearing a tiara on her head stepped into the room; there was no warmth in her eyes.

When the woman saw Han Jingru, surprise flickered on her face before it was quickly replaced by fury.

“You’ve woken up!” The woman exclaimed while glaring at Han Jingru. She reacted as though she just met her nemesis.

Han Jingru had no clue why the woman was behaving that way. The only thing he knew was the fact that he had safely arrived in the second world. Yet, he had no idea why he was there in

this place, why he was wearing the red robe, and who was the lady wearing the tiara.

“Who’re you?” he asked.

Without answering her, the woman stormed toward him and landed a hard slap on his face.

Her slap put Han Jingru in even more confusion. Judging from the intense hatred in the woman’s eyes, Han Jingru wondered whether he had done something bad to her. But then again, he did not have any awareness as to what he might have done.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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“I just want a useless man to be my husband. Do you really have to wake up at this most inopportune time?” Based on how resentful the woman looked, the fact that Han Jingru had regained his consciousness was, for some reason, a heavy blow to her.

Just as she raised her hand to slap Han Jingru again, he grabbed her wrist quickly enough to stop her from doing it.

Han Jingru was no pushover, and there was no way he could put up with the humiliation without having any background information.

Even though she was good-looking, Han Jingru was not tempted by her beauty, especially because he already had someone else in his mind.

“Where’s this place? Why am I wearing this? And, who are you?” Han Jingru questioned the woman.

The woman tried to wriggle her wrist from his hold. Her eyes glinted with astonishment when she noticed how strong Han Jingru was.

“This is an order - you mustn’t leave this room under all circumstances! Otherwise, I will kill you with all the means I can think of!” the woman demanded.

“Fine, I won’t go anywhere. But then again, I need to know what’s going on,” Han Jingru replied.

“Just let me go first. Somebody will do the explanation for you later and let you know what you should do next,” the woman answered.

As soon as Han Jingru loosened his grip on her wrist, the woman dashed out of the room without hesitation.

Staring at his reflection in the bronze mirror, Han Jingru had a bad premonition. Judging from the red robe he was wearing, he supposed he was getting married that day. However, that was not plausible at all because he just arrived in the second world.

On top of that, he had been in a coma just now. So, how was it possible that he was getting

married to that woman?

Han Jingru was in a pickle and his mind was jammed with doubts. Before long, the door to his room was pushed open once again. A girl who dressed like a maid walked into the room.

“I’m sent by Ms. Chen to answer all your questions,” the maid said to Han Jingru.

Based on how the maid and that lady just now were dressed, Han Jingru was of the opinion that the second world was highly likely an ancient civilization. His curiosity was piqued, and he was keen on taking a peek at how the outside world would look like.

However, he would not leave the room just yet before he had a clear idea of what was taking place. After all, he was not familiar with the second world. If someone discovered that he did not belong to their world, he might find himself in danger.

“How long had I been unconscious for?” Han Jingru posed the maid his first question.

“You’d been in a coma for three months,” the maid replied.

“What?” Han Jingru exclaimed in utter consternation. He could hardly believe it because he felt as though only a day had passed ever since he jumped into the portal.

“Ms. Chen thought you would stay unconscious for the rest of your life in the beginning,” the maid added.

Han Jingru took a deep breath to calm himself down before he asked the maid another question, “Why am I wearing this?”

“You’re getting married to Ms. Chen today,” the maid explained.

Han Jingru’s mind went completely blank at once.

Getting married to her?

I can’t believe the speculation I made just now is actually true!

Yet, Han Jingru was puzzled as to why the woman would be willing to marry a man who might be stuck in a coma for the rest of his life. *Is there something wrong with her mind?*

“Since Ms. Chen thought I wouldn’t be able to wake up for the rest of my life, why does she still want to marry me?” Han Jingru asked, looking confused.

“Ms. Chen doesn’t want to marry a man she doesn’t love. She would rather marry someone like you, who isn’t going to affect her life in any way,” the maid responded.

Han Jingru understood what the maid meant, but it was something that went against everything he believed in. He supposed he was just a tool used by that lady just now to show how reluctant she was to marry the guy arranged by her family.

Suddenly, Han Jingru placed a hand on his forehead and grimaced in pain.

“My head hurts.”

The maid was unflustered. As Ms. Chen wanted Han Jingru to be killed soon, the maid did not see the need to bother about his condition.

“I can’t seem to remember anything that happened before I passed out. Could you tell me where this place is, and where you guys found me?” Han Jingru asked.

“This is Chen residence in Longyun City.” The maid did quite a good job carrying out Ms. Chen’s instruction because she really answered all his questions patiently.

“You were discovered somewhere to the south of the city. I was told that your clothes were in tatters and you looked in terrible shape when you were found.”

“Did you guys find someone else other than me?” Han Jingru pressed on.

“Nope.”

They found no one else!

Where did Jiang Yingying end up then? Did we land in two different places because we were separated from each other in the space tunnel?

Han Jingru couldn't help but be worried about Jiang Yingying, considering that she was a girl and she was more danger-prone. At the same time, he wondered how she had fared after she landed.

“Do you have any more questions for me?” the maid asked.

“That’s all. I need to get some rest now,” Han Jingru replied.

The maid nodded and left the room.

Han Jingru stopped grimacing as soon as the maid left because he only pretended to be suffering from a headache just now.

There was nothing much he could do for the time being because he knew too little about the situation he was in. It seemed like he had no choice but to do the exploration of the second

world sometime later.

Although getting married to Ms. Chen sounded like a ridiculous idea to Han Jingru, he knew he could actually benefit from it. It was harder for people to find out that he did not really belong to the world if he became Ms. Chen's husband.

“Never in my wildest dreams could I imagine that I would be getting married for the second time in my life. Yimo, I'm not being unfaithful to you because this is what I found myself in right after I woke up. This whole thing is out of my control.”

The maid entered another room after leaving Han Jingru's room.

Chen Yanran was inside. By then, she already removed the tiara from her head, but she was still as grumpy as earlier. It was totally unacceptable to her that Han Jingru had regained consciousness.

“How did it go? What sort of questions did he ask you just now?” Chen Yanran asked the maid.

“Ms. Chen, he can’t seem to remember anything that happened before he passed out. He only asked me some of the very basic questions, including where this place is and why he is getting married to you,” the maid answered.

Chen Yanran looked frustrated. “I thought marrying a guy which was going to stay in a coma forever would solve the issue. How would I know he could still wake up? I have to come up with some way to kill him! There’s no way I will let someone like him become my husband!”

“Ms. Chen, won’t your effort all go down the drain after killing him?” the maid asked worryingly.

Chen Yanran flashed her a faint smile. “Why will it be? It’s only reasonable for me to stay a widow for three years to mourn the loss of my husband. That guy’s death will be able to grant me three years of freedom! Isn’t that quite a good bargain?”

“Ms. Chen, may I know what’s your plan?” the maid queried.

“The annual event of Longyun City - The Hunting - is just around the corner. I’ll come up with a plan to make sure he perishes during the event without looking suspicious,” Chen Yanran said with a cold expression.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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Meanwhile, Han Jingru was still being locked inside the room. Although he could just kick the door open to free himself, he did not opt to do that. After all, he had no idea what was going on beyond the door of the room, and he could not foresee what could happen after he left the room.

Being confined to the space of the room did not feel good. However, Han Jingru decided to play safe for the time being. If he was killed there, he might not be able to see Su Yimo and Han Xiang ever again.

As the sky slowly darkened and night befell, Han Jingru, who was lying on the bed, finally heard some footsteps approaching his room.

It was the maid who answered his questions just now. She came to bring food to him.

The dinner served was quite tasty. When he was digging in, the maid stood in the corner of the room. Han Jingru was slightly bothered by it because he had a feeling that she was there to spy on him.

“Are you the one who has been looking after me during the time I was in a coma?” Han Jingru asked.

“I only did it because I was instructed by Ms. Chen to do so. You don’t have to thank me.” The maid’s emotionless and cold voice made her reply sound automated.

“I wonder what sort of food you fed me when I was unconscious.” Han Jingru regarded the maid with confusion. He knew someone must have been feeding him with food because he did not feel hungry at all when he woke up that morning.

“You had a liquid diet during that period.”

Han Jingru nodded his head in acknowledgment. Then, he continued, “Who exactly is Ms. Chen? Is her family a wealthy and influential one in Longyun City?”

“Of course it is. The Chen family is one of the Three Major Families in Longyun City,” the maid responded. She was only being so cooperative merely because she was instructed by Ms. Chen

to answer Han Jingru's question. Otherwise, she would not even have spoken to him at all.

Han Jingru couldn't resist but break into a barely visible smile. *I must be a very lucky man to somehow end up staying with a wealthy and influential family even though I'm in the second world now. Seems like I'm fated to be loaded for my entire life huh?*

"Could you enlighten me on why Ms. Chen decided to marry me?" Han Jingru asked the maid again. He had pondered over that issue before and he had formed his own speculations. Now, it was time he had some definite answers from the maid.

"The son of the governor proposed marriage to Ms. Chen, but Ms. Chen is unwilling to marry him. So, you're used by Ms. Chen to avoid the marriage," the maid replied.

"Didn't her family members object to her marriage with me? After all, I was a man who was stuck in a vegetative state who might never wake up for the rest of my life."

The maid furrowed her slanted eyebrows and wondered, “What does ‘vegetative state’ means?”

Han Jingru’s chest tightened with anxiety seeing the confusion on the maid’s face. A term like ‘vegetative state’ was supposed to be foreign to the people here in the second world. Thus, he needed to pay extra attention to avoid using terms like that in the days that followed, or it would be a matter of time before he blew his cover.

“It doesn’t mean anything. I just pluck that term out of thin air to describe a man who is alive but can never wake up,” Han Jingru explained.

The maid immediately felt enlightened when she saw the striking similarities between the state of vegetables and the condition Han Jingru had been suffering before.

“No one is against Ms. Chen’s marriage with you because it’s a unanimous decision made by her as well as her family members,” the maid said.

*Are Ms. Chen and her family out of their minds?
How could her family allow her to marry an*

unconscious man instead of the governor

“Why is Ms. Chen unwilling to marry the governor’s son since the marriage will be able to boost her family’s social status in Longyun City?” Han Jingru wondered.

The maid started to show signs of impatience. “Please finish your dinner quickly. After this, someone will be here to assist you to take a bath and get changed.

Someone is going to help me take a bath and get changed?

Instinctively, Han Jingru took a sniff of himself, and he instantly noticed something peculiar. After being unconscious for such a long time, he was supposed to stink quite badly. Contrary to that, he actually smelled a lingering scent of soap from his body.

“Had someone been helping me to shower every single day during the time I was unconscious?” Han Jingru questioned.

“Yup.”

Han Jingru’s head drooped in dejection. *Does it mean that my entire body has already been exposed to the maids here?*

Before long, several maids came in to fill the bathtub with warm water. Although the maids were all quite pleasant-looking and appeared to be clever and obedient, Han Jingru dreaded to imagine their hands being all over his body. This might not amount to faithlessness to Su Yimo, but Han Jingru was still quite bugged by the fact that his naked body had been seen by the maids.

“You girls are free to go. I can handle it myself,” Han Jingru said to the maids who were fussing about his shower. He did not have the will to stop them when he had been unconscious. Now that he was fully awake, he would not allow the maids to touch his body under all circumstances.

However, the maids stood rooted to the spot instead of heeding to his instruction.

Seeing this, Han Jingru added a sharp edge to his

voice and reiterated, “I don’t need your help! Just leave me alone!”

“You girls may leave now.” Chen Yanran’s appearance fixed the problem for him.

Han Jingru was already impressed by Chen Yanran’s dazzling beauty the first time he set his eyes upon her. Although she was now wearing casual attire, she still looked gorgeous to him. It made Han Jingru even more baffled as to the reason why she was so averse to the idea of marrying the governor’s son.

“What’s your name?” Chen Yanran asked him.

“My first name is Jingru and my surname is Han. What about you?”

“Chen Yanran.”

“It’s a beautiful name.”

“I was told by the maids that you’ve forgotten everything that happened before you passed out. Is it true?” she asked.

“My mind is as empty as a blank canvas. Would you hire a physician to check on my condition? The maids told me that your family is a very influential and powerful one in the city. I guess my request shouldn’t be too demanding for you?” Han Jingru said.

Chen Yanran let out a sneer in her mind. There was no way she would find him a physician, considering that he was about to be killed soon.

“You’re free to take a walk around the city from tomorrow onward. By the way, the Hunting is going to be held in this city a fortnight later. You will be taking part in the event together with me,” Chen Yanran said.

“The Hunting - what’s that?” Han Jingru queried, sounding puzzled.

“It’s literally what the name suggests. If you have nothing else to discuss with me, I’ve got to go.” With that, Chen Yanran turned around and left, not giving a chance to Han Jingru to pose any more questions.

Han Jingru could tell that Chen Yanran was an aloof and very independent woman. In his opinion, she must have a specific reason not to marry the governor's son.

Yet, there were too few clues available for Han Jingru to gauge what exactly was on Chen Yanran's mind.

There was one thing he was happy to hear - he was finally allowed to leave the confined space of the room tomorrow. The sooner he understood Longyun city, the earlier he could know Chen Yanran better.

After taking a bath, he lay down on the bed where he admired the exceptionally bright moonlight in the sky. He couldn't help but wonder whether the moon was the same he saw on earth.

Han Jingru woke up the next morning to an icy sensation that lingered on his arm. To his surprise, he opened his eyes to find the little white snake back on his arm.

He had been trying to look for the snake after he woke up yesterday, but he found no sight of it. At first, he thought the snake had left him for good to return to the world it belonged to. Perhaps, the snake was hiding somewhere in the room yesterday so that people would not notice its presence.

“Little guy, I must say you’re really one who values loyalty and friendship huh? I’m pleased that you decided to stay with me,” Han Jingru remarked with amusement.

The little white snake hissed and stuck out its tongue at him. No one could be sure whether it was trying to express its loyalty to Han Jingru, or it was simply trying to scare him.

After that, Han Jingru got dressed and went out of the room.

He took a deep breath and was impressed by how fresh and clean the air was. “The air is so clean and fresh here compared to the Earth. It will be nice if I can bring Yimo and Xiang here to spend our retired life.”

Subsequent to making that comment, Han Jingru thought of the idea Su Yimo suggested before - she wanted the three of them to move to a place where polygamy was allowed. It seemed like the second world would be the perfect place for them.

The Chen residence was much more spacious than the Han residence in Yan City. Han Jingru thought that was completely reasonable, considering that the Chen family was one of the Three Major Families in Longyun City. The money spent on the land might just be peanuts to them. On top of that, lands in this world might not be as expensive as those on Earth too.

Han Jingru would have lost his way in the courtyard without the maid’s guidance. After making some effort to learn his way around the huge place, Han Jingru finally made it out to the

streets.

The entire city looked ancient and the folks roaming around were dressed in the same way. A glance at his surroundings made Han Jingru feel like he was barging into a set where a movie with an ancient setting was being filmed.

I wonder how it would look like if I drive a Ferrari along the streets here. Han Jingru couldn't help but chuckle at the thought.

It did not take him long to decide his destination. In his opinion, the teahouse was the best place to gain some insights on the city as well as the Chen family.

There was a teahouse named 'Beast Lair' which was most crowded with patrons. Its name was so bizarre that Han Jingru couldn't help but wonder why it was named that way.

As soon as he entered the teahouse, his arrival was greeted by one of the waiters who led him to a table. The rest of the patrons sitting within earshot were all having a discussion on Chen

Yanran's marriage, which was apparently the talk of the town at the moment.

"I'm really curious who is the guy Ms. Chen married to. No one has seen that guy around the city. Besides, I was told that he is a retard."

"A retard? From what I heard, he's a cripple."

"You guys are pretty slow in getting the updates. According to one of the servants working for the Chen family, that guy is a handicap with no hands."

Upon hearing those remarks, Han Jingru couldn't help but scratch his head and glance at his limbs. He wondered why he was suddenly said to be a disabled person in those rumors.

Han Jingru approached one of the tables and commented, "I heard from the grapevine that the guy has been unconscious for a very long time up until now. It beats me as to the reason why Ms. Chen married a guy like that."

The people at the table gave Han Jingru a once-

over. They welcomed him to join their discussion cordially though they had never seen him in town before.

“Someone told me that Chen Yanran only married that guy to show her determination to have a fall out with the governor.”

“Everyone in the city knows that Huang Xiaoyong has a crush on Chen Yanran for years. Guess what? More than ten dead bodies were dragged out of the governor’s residence during the wee hours last night. I was told that the dead bodies were the servants killed by Huang Xiaoyong in a fit of rage. My heart goes out for those poor souls.”

Han Jingru couldn’t help but furrow his brows in confusion. *Generally speaking, the governor should be the most respected man in the city. What exactly happened that could have led to the fall-out between Chen Yanran and the governor?*

“Why doesn’t Chen Yanran worry that the governor might do something harmful to her family?” Han Jingru questioned.

“Young man, you’re a newcomer, aren’t you?” One of them regarded him with amusement, as Han Jingru’s question sounded bizarre to him.

“Indeed, I just arrived and I need you guys to clear some of my doubts. Please let me foot the bill for you guys in return for your kindness,” Han Jingru proposed.

The bunch at the table were overjoyed to hear that. Because of Han Jingru’s generous offer, they were happy to share everything they knew with him.

From that, Han Jingru learned that the governor was not the most powerful man in the city. His power was limited by the Three Major Families of the city who funded the construction and maintenance of the facilities in the city. On top of that, the governor was only able to clinch his current position owing to the support from the three families too. In other words, the governor was nothing but a puppet without much power.

Now, it was said that the governor was fed up with being a puppet who merely received orders

from the three families. Therefore, the Chen family became the first to have a fall-out with the governor. Rumor was going around about their intention to remove the governor from his office and seize the position themselves. So, it was no surprise that Chen Yanran was blatantly setting herself against the governor now.

Han Jingru found it puzzling that the Chen family was the only one out of the Three Major Families who expressed their stance in this matter.

Since the governor was jointly supported by the three families back then, the three families were supposed to act in unison to remove the governor now.

There must be some underlying reason behind the matter which was not within the knowledge of the patrons at the teahouse. Perhaps, Chen Yanran's family had fallen victim to the plot of the other two families which was aimed at destroying them.

“Young man, we've told you pretty much everything we know about the Chen family. As

for the bill...”

“Don’t worry. I’ll take care of it,” Han Jingru reassured them with a pleasant smile.

“Thanks for your generous gesture. It’s about time we head to our next destination.”

The group of patrons bade him farewell by giving him a martial salute. After their departure, Han Jingru took his time to sort out the information he just gathered.

The first possible reason that could explain how things had been going was that the other two families might have joined forces with the governor to set a trap for Chen family in order to sabotage them.

The other possible reason was that the Chen family could be thinking of usurping the absolute control of the city. Therefore, they did not see the need to act in unison together with the other two families.

The second possibility was less likely than the

first. It was because the Chen family might not be strong enough to handle the joined forces between the two families and the governor.

“May I have the bill please?” Han Jingru thought it was time to go back to Chen residence. After all, it was impossible to find out everything about the matter within one day. Thus, he planned to go back and get some rest so that he would have enough energy to learn about the Hunting tomorrow.

Just then, the waiter walked up to Han Jingru, waiting to be paid. Yet, Han Jingru couldn't even produce a single coin after rummaging through every corner between the folds of his robe.

Not only did he have no money, but he also did not even have a clue how the currency used in the second world looked like.

“Boss, someone is trying to dine and dash here!” Eyeing Han Jingru suspiciously, the waiter shouted at the top of his lungs.

The teahouse knew exactly what to do and was

prompt in doing so, probably because they had dealt with patrons like Han Jingru many times before. Soon, Han Jingru was besieged by a group of burly men who were wielding a wooden bat in their hands.

“Young man, you’re digging your own grave by trying to dine and dash here at my place!” The owner of the teahouse, who was a middle-aged man, snapped menacingly.



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



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A troubled expression crept up Han Jingru's face. For all his life, money was never a prime concern for him. After all, the man was wealthy enough to never be plagued by any form of financial concerns.

That was until this very moment when he stood before the boss of the Beast Lair without a single penny on him. "Please hear me out... It's not that I don't have money, it's just... I forgot to bring cash with me today."

The boss did not buy his explanation. After all, the man had heard of many similar excuses and learned better not to trust them. Relying on his fists, he was all prepared to beat the unpaying customer up.

Han Jingru had no choice to expose his connections. It was not that he was terrified of the incoming aggression, but rather he just did not want to cause a commotion at the teahouse.

"I'm related to the Chen family. If you still refuse to believe me, you can come home with me. I promise to pay you the money. In fact, I can

double the payment for you.”

“You know the Chen family?” The boss inspected him closely. *Well, he does seem to dress in high-end clothing. His shirt appears to be made of good-quality silk. Definitely not something a normal family can afford.*

“How are you related to the Chen family?” he inquired.

The question was a tricky one to answer. After all, if he answered truthfully that he was Chen Yanran’s husband, no one would believe him. Everyone thought her husband was some crippled, intellectually disabled man.

And so, he settled with saying that he was a relative of the Chen family. “Just follow me and you’ll understand,” he persuaded.

However, the boss remained skeptical. Beckoning his staff over, he instructed, “Send a note to the Chen family to inform them that one of their relatives is refusing to pay up at the Beast Lair. Get them over quickly to resolve this at once.”

Han Jingru could finally heave a sigh of relief, knowing that someone would be coming to bail him out of this predicament.

While waiting, the two began to chat. Han Jingru switched to a lighter topic to ease the atmosphere. “I hope you don’t mind me asking, how did this Beast Lair teahouse get its name?”

It was a topic the boss was more than happy to discuss. Beaming with pride, he answered, “It’s because I once killed a beast with my bare hands! Everyone in Longyun City knows about it.”

What followed was a vivid storytelling session of the battle with the said beast. Han Jingru could tell that the boss had probably retold this tale countless times, given how fluent he was in his narration.

Through the descriptions, Han Jingru deduced that the said beast was likely a type of familiar. He also grasped that it was possible to conquer familiars and that doing so was regarded as a glorious achievement in Xenos.

“But sadly, that beast would not cooperate, so I had to kill it in the end. If it were tamed, I wouldn’t be stuck here... “ With that, the boss concluded his epic tale. However, the actual truth was that he simply picked up a beast by sheer chance and spun an entire story out of it just to boost Beast Lair’s reputation.

“What happens if you manage to tame a beast?” asked Han Jingru.

The boss was surprised at his rudimentary question. *Everyone in Xenos knows what happens afterward. Why are you asking something so commonsensical?*

A tinge of annoyance was discernable in his tone as he replied, “Are you trying to tease me?”

Han Jingru knew immediately that he had asked the wrong question. The answer was likely a universal knowledge in this world. Thus, it was no surprise that the boss mistook his ignorance for something else.

He was just about to explain himself when the

teahouse welcomed a new figure. Han Jingru was astonished when he saw who it was.

Of all people in the Chen family, it's Chen Yanran who shows up? Seriously?

Equally flabbergasted, the boss stammered, “O-Oh! It's Ms. Chen!”

“Are you the boss here?” the lady asked.

He nodded excessively, evidently nervous at Chen Yanran's appearance.

“This is my husband. He forgot to bring along his money when he left the house. I apologize on his behalf.”

The air went still in the teahouse for a moment. Everyone was processing what Chen Yanran said in utter disbelief.

Until this point, any description about Chen Yanran's husband was nothing but pure speculation. The most common narrative was along the lines of him being crippled or straight-

up moronic.

At some point, Han Jingru's existence became a living myth. Yet, at this very moment, the man was standing right before them, neither crippled nor intellectually disabled.

The patrons at the teahouse were not the only ones who were shocked. Han Jingru himself was taken aback by Chen Yanran's casual revelation of their relationship in public.

Are women always this unpredictable? Didn't she just tell me yesterday that I better not leave the house?

The boss grew even more flustered. "A-Ah! So he's your husband! Please don't fret over the money. It's not a big deal." The Chen family held a lot of authority in Longyun City, and a mere teahouse boss would not dare to offend them.

"Thank you for understanding," Chen Yanran replied as she shot Han Jingru a glance.

The man obediently joined her side, and the pair

left the teahouse soon after.

A plethora of comments flooded the teahouse following their departure. “So that’s Chen Yanran’s husband! He doesn’t seem as terrible as the rumors make him out to be.”

“I agree. In fact, they look very compatible together. He looks like a poised gentleman who can match up to her elegance. To be frank, I think Huang Xiaoyong is a far cry away from him in terms of looks.”

“But looks are not everything. Huang Xiaoyong would easily flatten him in a duel. Honestly, if I were him, I would start praying for myself right now. Once Huang Xiaoyong finds out about his identity, it’s going to be game over.”

The news spread like wildlife on the same day. Soon, the entire Longyun City knew who Han Jingru was.

“Why did you do that?” Han Jingru questioned as the two made their way back to the Chen residence.

“I’m simply telling everyone the truth. Is there something wrong?”

“The Chen family and the people at the governor’s residence are at each other’s throats. Are you doing this to trigger Huang Xiaoyong so that I would meet my demise sooner?”

“He would have gone after you a long time ago if he dared. We wouldn’t even be married if that was the case.”

That does make sense. Huang Xiaoyong would have already separated us if he had the guts to do so.

If it’s not about Huang Xiaoyong, then there must be another reason behind the revelation.

“Although Huang Xiaoyong doesn’t have the courage to kill me, you still really want me dead, right?”

Chen Yanran merely responded with, “We’re already married, and that’s a fact that’s set in stone. If so, then why will I ever want you dead?”

The woman remained as unreadable as ever. Han Jingru could not make out what was going through her mind, and her Machiavellianism was unnerving.

“By the way, please explain the whole situation about The Hunting,” he requested indignantly. He knew Chen Yanran was scheming something.

Surprisingly, the lady had nothing to hide and answered his query, “If you want to make a name for yourself in Xenos and leave the small Longyun City, you need to get the Imperial Court’s attention. An ideal way to do so is to tame a beast successfully.”



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Wait! I Have Something to Say!



Send a Gift to the Writer!

Chen Yanran's ambition was discernible in her words. Han Jingru could sense that she wanted to leave the small town and go somewhere better.

Perhaps, she really does want the role of the governor.

This made Chen Yanran the polar opposite of Su Yimo. The latter never once concerned herself with status and power. She only fell out with her family when there was no other choice.

When they returned home, Chen Yanran handed a book to Han Jingru. It was titled *Mountains And Rivers*.

“What is this?”

“It will tell you more about Xenos since you don't remember anything about it.” She then left without another word. To a complete stranger, it would be impossible to guess that they were a married couple.

Han Jingru began reading the book soon after, knowing full well that learning more about Xenos

was of paramount importance right now.

Outside the room, Chen Yanran's maid asked why the lady wanted to help Han Jingru despite intending to kill him.

"It's my final gesture of pity for him," she replied flatly.

Obviously, the maid knew that the reason was not that simple. She had grown up with Chen Yanran and knew the lady would never do anything without an ulterior motive, so helping Han Jingru learn about Xenos must also be a strategic move on her side.

But being aware of her lowly status as a servant, she knew not to overstep her boundaries and probe further. Whatever Chen Yanran wanted to do was her own right.

Inside the room, Han Jingru was mesmerized by the fascinating tales about Xenos. It was not long before he made it through a significant amount of pages.

In the book, the author made mention of a special rank system in Xenos. While the description was vague, Han Jingru grasped the general idea that there were nine Stages in total, with the Ninth Stage being the strongest. Beyond the nine Stages, there were top-notch fighters known as Pinnacle Masters, and there were only less than ten of these first-rate fighters in all of Xenos. Legend had it that Pinnacle Masters were so powerful that each of them could take down a thousand troops.

In Xenos, there was also another highly respected group of people—the Beastmasters. They were powerful individuals who could control familiars, and their menace rivaled that of a Pinnacle Master.

Whenever a new Beastmaster emerged, every nation would invest considerable resources to fight for them.

Han Jingru glanced at the little white snake on his arm, wondering if he were considered a Beastmaster and if the nations would fight for him.

The book also recorded information about the three nations in Xenos—Xia Nation, Chongye, and Imperial Court. Longyun City, where he was residing, was located in Imperial Court.

The description of Xia Nation was skeletal. It was merely described as a “magical” place, without mentioning any other information. This left Han Jingru extremely curious.

As for Chongye, the book described it as a place filled with savages who drank blood and ate raw meat.

It was not long before Han Jingru reached the final page of the book. Being an enlightening read, the book offered him substantial information about the world.

Suddenly, the expressionless maid entered the room to deliver a warning. Han Jingru was advised not to go outside for the next few days.

“Why?” Just one day before, Chen Yanran had said that he could roam the city freely. *Now they are locking me up?*

“It’s for your own good. Huang Xiaoyong has sent many people to ambush you nearby. You’re dead the moment you step out of the residence.”

That clarified Han Jingru’s puzzlement. “I see. Since I don’t have much to do these days, I will stay at home.”

His response triggered the maid’s belittlement. *Coward.*

Her disrelish did not escape Han Jingru’s eyes, but the man remained unbothered. His opponent was the governor’s son, after all. Without any backing, he was better off staying low-key and avoiding confrontations.

“Honestly, it makes no difference even if you continued to stay in a coma,” Having said that, the maid left the room.

Han Jingru stood up and stretched lazily, muttering to himself, “What do you know? I’m merely afraid that I may accidentally kill Huang Xiaoyong.”

While he was not certain of his exact skill level, but he was confident enough to presume that no one in Longyun City could hold a candle to him. But then again, given his situation, he knew that putting himself out there was not an ideal move.

Moreover, staying indoors was not too terrible. The Chen residence was spacious enough for him to spend the hours fruitfully.

He soon found a suitable pastime—fishing. There was a koi pond in the backyard, and he made himself a fishing rod for his new hobby.

The servants were bewildered by his antics as if they had never seen what fishing was.

When the man lost interest in fishing, he turned to other pastimes. A week soon passed, and the commencement of The Hunting neared.

One day, when Han Jingru woke up and was ready for another round of fishing, Chen Yanran's maid came running frantically into his room.

“Why do you look so anxious? The sky's

falling?” he teased.

Her face was pale. “M-Ms. Chen is in trouble. You’re her husband, so you need to go rescue her.”

Han Jingru replied without hesitation, “On the documents, I’m her husband. In reality, we are no better than strangers. I doubt she wants me interfering in her affairs anyway.”

“Could you please man up? Ms. Chen desperately needs help, and you’re just going to watch on like a bystander?”

The maid’s words had no effect on the man as he never truly reckoned Chen Yanran as his wife. Thus, he had no concern over her matters either.

“You throw that phrase around as if you know what being a man means. Anyway, my sentiments remain. If there are no other matters, please don’t disturb my peaceful fishing session.”

She was not giving up. Stepping before him, the maid said firmly, “You must go.”

The maid's unreasonable persistence irritated Han Jingru greatly.

You know better than anyone else that I don't really care about Chen Yanran, and yet you're still insisting that I help her?

"I believe she doesn't know that you're doing this," he said coldly.

He hit the nail on the head as the maid was acting on her own accord.

Seeing that he was right, he continued, "Let me make another guess. She's in trouble because of the other two families?"

"How do you know?" She never expected him to be so astute.

Han Jingru merely suppressed a chuckle. *Well, these things are way too obvious. You don't have to think that hard.*

He knew that Chen Yanran's ambition would get her into trouble, such as landing herself into a

trap set up by the two other families.

As a contender for the governor, Chen Yanran was a significant threat. If people from the other two families got the role instead, they could manipulate the governor easily. But the lady was different. She was tough and would not be subjected to such things. As such, it was not surprising if they ganged up on her just so that she could not get the role.

Moreover, the other two families already intended on eroding the Chen family's authority from the beginning.

“Don't doubt my intelligence. Anyway, I believe Ms. Chen will wiggle her way out of the situation, so my help is likely unnecessary,” he told the maid.

She shook her head. “It's different this time. They have a Fourth Stage fighter with them. The Chen family has no one on par to deal with him. I'm worried for Ms. Chen's safety.”

Fourth Stage fighter?

While Han Jingru had no idea how good the opponent was exactly, he knew that the Fourth Stage was still considered the lower rung of the ranking system, given that there were nine Stages in total. *The Chen family is so big, yet they don't even have someone to deal with a Fourth Stage fighter?*

But then again, he realized that Longyun City was a small place. No powerful fighters would be willing to camp here forever. As such, having a Fourth Stage fighter was probably a very rare occurrence.

“Take a look at me,” he told the maid suddenly.

She was puzzled but did as requested. “Done... And what?”

He could not resist rolling his eyes. “Do I look like someone who can defeat the said fighter? Have you seen my spindly figure? Why are you asking help from me, of all people?”

Her expression grew grave. *Right, what was I thinking? How can he ever defeat the fighter?*

But she was still worried for Chen Yanran as none of the Chen family elders were at home to help her. Hence, Han Jingru was the last resort. “You must help her regardless, even at the expense of your life.”

Han Jingru laughed at her statement. *Is my life so worthless to you?*

“My life is way more valuable than hers. I’ll repeat myself once and for all. I am not going to put my safety on the line just to help her. Please take your leave.”

The maid was at her wit’s end and attempted to threaten him, “If something happens to Ms. Chen, you’re going to die too. The Chen family and Huang Xiaoyong will see to that.”

It was the first convincing argument Han Jingru heard. It actually made sense since his current tranquility was attributed to his status as Chen Yanran’s husband. If something did happen to the lady, eviction would be guaranteed. Afterward, he would have to deal with Huang Xiaoyong, who had been waiting for him out there all this

while.

In summary, it would be a greatly undesirable outcome. Right then, what he needed to do was to stay out of the spotlight and spend more time understanding Xenos, rather than be embroiled in altercations.

With that, he conceded to the request. “I’m glad that we’re finally having a proper conversation. Alright, I’ll help. Please lead the way.”

The maid was that close to flying into a rage. “You... “*Was I not speaking to you properly since the start?*”

The atmosphere was tense at the antechamber in the Chen residence. Chen Yanran was seated at the main seat. Across her were two sly elders from the other two families, and a Fourth Stage fighter stood behind them.

The usually confident Chen Yanran found herself disconcerted by the appearance of the fighter. She never expected them to be able to find one.

Han Jingru's entrance broke the tension immediately.

Greeting the room with a cheerful smile, he looked like a total fool. "What's the occasion? Seems rather exciting here!"

The lady frowned at his abrupt appearance.

It was not hard to guess why he was here, judging by the sheepish expression of her maid.

One of the elders boomed, "Who're you?"

"Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Han Jingru, husband of Chen Yanran." The radiant smile never left his face.

Laughter followed his introduction. By now, everyone knew about how Han Jingru was unable to pay up at the Beast Lair. His name became synonymous with a clown, and his current behavior only corroborated the claims of how utterly foolish he was.

"Chen Yanran, I must commend your judgment.

It's not every day that one can find such an exquisite piece of trash. In fact, marrying him was a good move, I must say. This man here can't do anything to you, while public commentary can be hushed too. Meanwhile, your marriage encourages Huang Xiaoyong to give up his pursuits. You're indeed a wise lady."

While she concurred with the description of Han Jingru, the remark hit differently when it came from someone else's mouth. She could not help but get second-hand embarrassment.

"Han Jingru, why are you here? This is none of your business. Get out quickly," Chen Yanran instructed harshly.

Well, I don't want to be here either. But unfortunately, I need to make sure you're alive, lest my safety net disappears.

Swallowing his thoughts, he replied, "We are married, so your problem is my problem. As your husband, I can't possibly just watch you get bullied from the sidelines. Moreover, I heard that a Fourth Stage fighter is here today. I'm curious

about his power.”

As if on cue, the said fighter literally made a loud statement of his presence by crushing the wooden table beside him with his bare hands. The scene left Chen Yanran in shock.

“And now you know. If you are sensible, you’d be taking your leave,” growled the middle-aged fighter.

Han Jingru artfully displayed an astonished expression. But frankly, he was less than impressed by the scene before him. It was a simple performance he could easily pull off himself.

“Impressive! As expected of a Fourth Stage fighter indeed,” he complimented.

The two elders giggled at Han Jingru’s reaction. To them, the man looked like a frog in a well.

“Chen Yanran, good taste indeed.”

The other elder added, “You may really have

made the wrong move this time. Han Jingru might save you from the vexations caused by Huang Xiaoyong, but he will also turn you into a laughing stock.”



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Chen Yanran's face darkened upon hearing the elder's comments. She directed a fearsome glare at her maid, infuriated by her unnecessary intervention. *If Han Jingru isn't here, I won't have to tolerate these sarcastic remarks!*

Then, returning her attention to the elders, she responded to their teases as politely as she could. "These are my own matters. There is no need to fret over them."

One of the elders turned to Han Jingru and warned, "Are you not going to leave? Have you not seen what our fighter here is capable of?"

"Tsk... Tsk..." Han Jingru shook his head.

His reaction inflamed the fighter. "What is the meaning of that?"

"I just recalled that the Chen residence also has a pretty skilled fighter. There's this stone that's tough like steel in the backyard, but the fighter managed to break it with his bare hands. In hindsight, your display doesn't seem that impressive anymore."

The fighter merely scoffed, “Longyun City will never have such an individual. If you’re attempting to intimidate me, try harder.”

“Intimidate?” Han Jingru shook his head. “I don’t tell lies. If you don’t believe me, ask my wife. She saw it too.”

His pronouncement evidently wavered the confidence of the elders and the fighter. If someone like that really existed, they were well aware that they were doomed.

Is that why Chen Yanran looks so calm right now? Did she manage to get someone stronger than a Fourth Stage fighter?

In actuality, the lady was as confused as them. She was, however, smart enough to play along with Han Jingru for now.

“It’s true,” she responded.

“You see? Well, if you still don’t buy my words, just follow me.”

The elders were skeptical, but they did not want to take any chances.

“Go and take a look,” they gestured to the fighter.

The man complied. “Lead the way.”

“My pleasure,” beamed Han Jingru as the two disappeared to the backyard. While taking his leave, he shot a knowing look at Chen Yanran, who was baffled.

What is he doing?

When they were gone, the tension only thickened in the antechamber, and the elders were on tenterhooks. If Han Jingru were not bluffing, their plan to destroy the Chen family would have to go back to square one.

At the empty backyard, Han Jingru stopped in his tracks. The fighter asked, “So where’s the stone?”

Instead of answering, Han Jingru changed the topic. “You know, I have been thinking about something... “

“What is it?”

A haughty grin crept onto his face. “I have been wondering how many of my blows can you endure.”

This elicited an unamused look from the fighter. *What a b*stard with zero sense of self-awareness.*

“Are you that desperate for a beating? I hope you know that even if you’re part of the Chen family, I won’t hesitate to kill you.”

The fighter barely finished his sentence when something flashed in front of him.

Before he could react, a fist landed heavily on his chest.

Thud!

It all happened in a blink of an eye. Han Jingru was still motionless a second ago. But the next instant, the fighter was already lying on the ground, bleeding from every orifice in his body.

“You should feel honored since you’re the first person I killed in Xenos.”

The fighter stood absolutely no chance. His final word came out as a whimper.

“You...”

“Your skill level is just slightly higher than the Gold rank in the Apocalypse. Thank you for giving me a clearer idea about the ranks in Xenos.”

Following Han Jingru’s merciless parting words, the fighter’s body was lowered into the pond. He would never rest in peace knowing that he, a Fourth Stage fighter, was absolutely no match for the man he previously regarded as a useless piece of trash.

When the deed was done, Han Jingru made his way back nonchalantly. The fighter’s absence was telling, sparking concerns from the elders.

“Where is he? Why have you come back alone?”

“Where’s our fighter? Where did you bring him to?”

“Dear elders, please calm down for a bit. Before you assume that I did anything to him, just remember that he’s a Fourth Stage fighter. What happened was that he left as soon as he saw the said stone, saying that he had other matters to attend to. I think he looked pretty pale when he was leaving.”

The elders were taken aback.

It was obvious that the man came up with an excuse to leave. If the fighter, whom the elders paid to come here, fled with such a meek excuse, it could only mean that the Chen residence did have a weapon up their sleeves.

Gritting his teeth, one elder turned to Chen Yanran and remarked, “Wow, Ms. Chen... I didn’t know that there’s a such a skilled individual in the Chen residence.”

Chen Yanran kept up a stoic front. “If you can hire a Fourth Stage fighter, I think it’s fair that we

have some backing on our side too. For protection, that is.”

Knowing that the odds were against them, the elders desperately wanted to leave. “We have something else to do, so we’ll get going now. Farewell, Ms. Chen.”

“Not going to stay for some tea? It’s pretty good,” teased Han Jingru.

The elders’ figures disappeared into the distance before the man could even finish his sentence. In fact, it looked as if they almost began running. Han Jingru couldn’t help but chuckle at the sight.

“How did you do it?” Chen Yanran, who walked over to his side, inquired. She knew clearly that no such pro resided in the house, so the fighter definitely left for another reason.

“Would you believe me if I said that I bribed him to leave?”

“Bribe? You have the money?” scoffed Chen Yanran.

“Well, it’s too tedious to explain the whole situation. What if I don’t want to tell you? What can you do to me?” Frankly, Han Jingru could easily conjure up an entirely false narrative to fool Chen Yanran. But that was too much work for a woman he had no feelings for.

“This is my house. Anything that has occurred here must be reported to me,” the lady insisted sternly.

“Fine. I killed him.”

Han Jingru gave the curt reply and walked away, leaving behind an angered Chen Yanran. *How dare he brush me off like this?*

The maid came over to her side. “Ms. Chen, did he really kill the Fourth Stage fighter?”

Chen Yanran scorned at the seeming absurdity. “I don’t think that useless man is capable of that.”

The maid frowned. With Han Jingru's current strength, it was impossible for him to kill a Fourth Stage fighter. However, she couldn't fathom why the fighter mysteriously disappeared. Driven by her curiosity, she wanted to find out the reason.

"Ms. Chen, do you want to investigate what happened?" the maid asked.

"Check if anything valuable has gone missing in the house," Chen Yanran instructed. The Fourth Stage fighter was willing to help the two families because of profit. Therefore, Chen Yanran believed the only reason Han Jingru managed to get him to leave was that he offered him more money. Money could move mountains. Despite how strong the Fourth Stage fighter was, he probably succumbed to his love for money.

After the two patriarchs left the Chen residence, they didn't go their separate ways. Instead, they found a quiet place to discuss their next move against the Chen family.

"Mr. Wang, I didn't expect Chen Yanran to have

someone that's even more powerful. This has thrown all our plans into disarray. So how should we proceed?" the Xie family patriarch asked.

The Wang family patriarch had a grim expression on his face. The development was indeed something beyond their expectations. They thought that a Fourth Stage fighter was enough to subdue the Chen family. However, given that the fighter had fled in fear, there was definitely an even more powerful fighter in the Chen residence, at least someone at the Fifth Stage. Given how small Longyun City was, a Fifth Stage fighter would likely be the strongest in the city.

"Sigh." The Wang family patriarch lamented, "I really didn't expect Chen Yanran to be so capable. We cannot underestimate this woman."

The Xie family patriarch nodded in agreement. He added, "That's true. With such a strong fighter in the Chen family, it will be difficult for both our families to act against them. Chen Yanran has really guarded her secret well."

“We have to plan our next move carefully and not take this matter lightly. Or else, our plan might backfire on us. Anyway, let’s return home and see if we can find someone more powerful,” the Wang family patriarch suggested.

“By the way, there’s still Han Jingru. Should we think of a way to dispose of him? Previously in the great hall, that piece of trash was disrespectful to us,” the Xie family patriarch remarked.

The Wang family patriarch snorted before suggesting, “As for Han Jingru, just leave it to Huang Xiaoyong. He can’t wait to teach that good-for-nothing a lesson.”

“In that case...” the Xie family patriarch whispered, “Should we tell Huang Xiaoyong about the formidable fighter in the Chen family?”

The Wang family patriarch laughed deviously and replied, “Of course we shouldn’t. We are aiming to take down both the governor and the Chen family. If we can sow discord and cause them to fight amongst themselves, we would be

the ones to benefit from the chaos.”

Both devious old men exchanged knowing glances and let out a cunning smile. There was no need to say anything further.

At the governor’s residence.

Cries of anguish could be heard from the backyard. Huang Xiaoyong was venting his frustration on the servants by using them as punching bags. The ground was strewn with men who were grievously hurt, but Huang Xiaoyong didn’t care at all.

As the governor’s son, he had acted with impunity since he was a child. There was no need for him to consider the feelings of others. Even when he killed someone, his father would deal with the aftermath and not allow Huang Xiaoyong to be held accountable.

As Longyun City was located at the border and far from the Imperial Court, the leaders at the Imperial Court were oblivious to what the Huang family was doing there. This allowed Huang

Xiaoyong's father to exercise absolute authority as if he were the emperor himself.

“Young Master, the Xie family has sent a messenger.” One of the servants approached Huang Xiaoyong carefully. Ever since Chen Yanran got married, Huang Xiaoyong's temper took a turn for the worst. Even though he had served Huang Xiaoyong for ten years, he didn't dare bother the man without a good reason.

“What did they say?” Huang Xiaoyong had bulging muscles, and he looked exactly like a bodybuilder from one of Earth's gyms. The difference was that his muscles weren't just for show, unlike the bodybuilders on Earth, who all took steroids.

“The Xie family went to the Chen residence and saw Chen Yanran's husband.”

Husband!

That word alone sent Huang Xiaoyong into a jealous rage. As he sent his servant flying with a kick, the man roared, “Only I deserve to be Chen

Yanran's husband. Who is this husband you are talking about?"

The servant rubbed his stomach while grimacing in pain. Aware that he had said something wrong, he prostrated at Huang Xiaoyong's feet and pleaded, "Young Master, it's my fault. Please forgive me."

Huang Xiaoyong looked down at him and ordered, "Continue the message."

Trembling in fear, the servant added, "The messenger said that Han Jingru is infamous for being useless. Compared to you, he's just an insect waiting to be squashed. Hence, disposing of him should be an easy task for you."

"Han Jingru?" Huang Xiaoyong's eyes were filled with rage as he had long wanted to tear him to pieces. However, he was unable to do so as Han Jingru continued to hide in the Chen residence, staying out of Huang Xiaoyong's reach.

He was dying to storm the Chen residence but

was afraid that Chen Yanran would be upset.

Despite being a brute, he trod carefully when it came to the matters related to Chen Yanran. After all, he fancied her and didn't want to do anything that would cause her to resent him.

Deep down, Huang Xiaoyong believed that one day Chen Yanran would come to realize that he was the one for her. Other than him, no one else was good enough.

“Watch the Chen residence for me. Inform me immediately the moment he leaves,” Huang Xiaoyong instructed.

“Yes.” Holding his stomach, the servant hobbled away.

At the Chen residence.

After Han Jingru killed the Fourth Stage fighter, he let the fighter's body sink to the bottom of the pond. No one would suspect anything for the meantime as they didn't expect him to be capable of killing a Fourth Stage fighter.

At that moment, Han Jingru felt curious about something.

Thinking back to the time he entered the Apocalypse Restricted Area, the Dimensional Tunnel made him feel as if he was somehow connected to Xenos. Furthermore, he felt the same way the second time he passed through it.

Hence, Han Jingru assumed that the feeling would intensify now that he was in Xenos. To his surprise, he no longer felt anything. He wondered why the feeling he had in the Restricted Area disappeared once he entered Xenos.

“Could the feeling be triggered by the Dimensional Tunnel instead of Xenos?” Han Jingru mumbled to himself with a frown.

Despite racking his brains, Han Jingru couldn't figure out what was going on. Hence, he set the matter aside for the moment.

Opening the windows and gazing into the courtyard, he realized that Xenos' landscape was indeed otherworldly. Every time he saw the

beautiful surroundings, he was reminded of how wonderful it was to stay here, to the extent that he wanted to bring Su Yimo and Han Xiang over if he had the chance.



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“Ms. Chen, I have checked the valuables, and nothing is missing.”

The maid reported the result of her investigations to Chen Yanran. Nothing was missing at all, not even the expensive items.

“It seems that my new husband is someone who is secretly rich,” Chen Yanran commented with a smile.

“However, wasn’t he unable to pay for a drink at Beast Lair?” the maid asked curiously.

Chen Yanran smiled faintly and replied, “He must have his reasons for not revealing his wealth and background. Until now, we know nothing about him. Who knows? He might even belong to a prominent family but was somehow chased out for some unknown reason.”

The reason Chen Yanran speculated along those lines was that she couldn’t imagine Han Jingru beating the Fourth Stage fighter with his own strength. It was even harder for her to believe him when he said he killed the fighter.

It's impossible for someone stronger than a Fourth Stage fighter to be in a small place like Longyun City. Furthermore, he looks like someone who relies on a woman for a living.

“Ms. Chen, do you mean that he is an abandoned son of a prominent family?” the maid asked in surprise.

Chen Yanran nodded and replied, “That’s possible. Maybe he is just pretending to have lost his memory.”

Chen Yanran was an intelligent woman, but that was precisely why her imagination ran wild. She was used to overanalyzing and dissecting an issue more than she needed to. The more she did it, the further she strayed from the truth.

“Ms. Chen, if that’s the case, do you still want to kill him?” The maid was curious. If Han Jingru were a nobody, killing him would not have any repercussions. However, if he were someone important, they would have to reevaluate their decision.

Chen Yanran was deliberating on the same issue. When she presumed Han Jingru to be someone useless, she didn't care if he died. But now, if he was indeed a member of a prominent family, his life had become a lot more valuable.

In fact, Chen Yanran surmised that if she could control Han Jingru, he would be a useful tool for her future prospects.

“I will force the truth out of him. If he is indeed worth something, I may consider letting him live,” Chen Yanran suggested.

The Hunting would be held as planned. However, her scheme to assassinate Han Jingru had turned into an interrogation attempt. As to whether Han Jingru would end up dying in the end, it would depend on how satisfied she was with his answer.

From Chen Yanran's perspective, she held Han Jingru's life in her hands. Whether he lived or died would be at her whim.

“You're really smart, Ms. Chen.”

Han Jingru was starting to feel frustrated after being stuck at home for a few days. Although the Chen residence had a large courtyard, he still felt as if he was kept in a cage. Living like a prisoner wasn't something he enjoyed at all.

Furthermore, if he were confined within the Chen residence, there was no way he could search for Jiang Yingying.

“It appears I cannot avoid Huang Xiaoyong forever. Staying cooped inside here isn't doing me any good,” Han Jingru mumbled to himself in resignation. He didn't want to attract attention to himself, but the circumstances left him no choice.

When he walked toward the entrance of the courtyard, the maid appeared out of nowhere and blocked his way.

“Don't you know that Huang Xiaoyong has his men outside waiting for you? Have you forgotten my warning to you?” The maid gave Han Jingru a stern stare. Although he was Chen Yanran's husband in name, his status within the Chen family was lower than that of the lowest ranking

servants.

Even the security guards dared to criticize Han Jingru and didn't respect him at all, let alone Chen Yanran's trusted maid.

"I'm just going out for a walk," Han Jingru replied.

"A walk?" the maid sneered at Han Jingru, "do you think once you step out that door, you would be able to return alive? Huang Xiaoyong would definitely kill you."

"Don't be so dramatic. Although he is the governor's son, he still can't act with such impunity," Han Jingru replied.

The maid shook her head in resignation. The way she saw it, Han Jingru was an idiot. Although Huang Xiaoyong couldn't kill as he wished, he wasn't stupid. There was no way he was going to kill Han Jingru in broad daylight. As long as it was done discreetly and Han Jingru's death was kept a secret, no one would even care.

“Let me break it to you. If trash like you died, no one would bat an eyelid. As long as Huang Xiaoyong doesn’t do it in public, he won’t be held accountable,” the maid explained.

Han Jingru let out a faint smile when he realized how familiar the situation was. He was being labeled as trash again, just like how it was in Yun City.

When Han Jingru had just married into the Su family, he received similar treatment. Therefore, enduring the insults and humiliation was a trivial matter to him. After going through so much, he didn’t care about having derogatory names hurled at him.

Only a real piece of trash would be outraged when scolded as such.

As for Han Jingru, he could make them eat their words anytime with his strength. Therefore, he couldn’t care less what others said about him.

“Let’s see if I can come back alive.” Just as he spoke, Han Jingru headed out the entrance.

The maid furrowed her eyebrows intensely. *Why is this piece of trash so stubborn? Since when did he have the courage to face Huang Xiaoyong?*

“Let me give you another piece of advice. Huang Xiaoyong is someone ruthless. If you really go out there, you will not return alive. Please consider it carefully,” the maid reminded.

Nonetheless, Han Jingru walked past the maid as he headed out, ignoring what she had just said. In Longyun City, a Fourth Stage fighter was supposed to be invincible. However, such a fighter was only a little stronger than a Gold-rank fighter in Apocalypse. Therefore, Han Jingru wasn't the least bit worried.

“Thanks for your kind advice.” Having said that, Han Jingru stepped out the front door without looking back.

The maid seethed. “You piece of trash! Ignore my advice at your own peril. When you're at death's door, I sure hope you can still maintain that shitty attitude of yours.”

After berating Han Jingru, the maid hurried toward Chen Yanran's room. Now that Han Jingru had left the Chen residence, Chen Yanran had to be the first to know.

Meanwhile, Chen Yanran was changing in the bathroom. Her skin was as fair as snow. To any man, it was the ultimate temptation. Even the maid's heart raced when she saw Chen Yanran.

"Ms. Chen, Han Jingru has left the Chen residence," the maid reported.

Chen Yanran, who was sitting in the bathtub, replied casually, "That's good news."

"Good news?" The maid raised her eyebrows in curiosity. *Huang Xiaoyong's men are outside waiting for Han Jingru, so he is practically walking into a death trap. How can that be good news?*

"Of course it's good news. If he is an abandoned son of a prominent family, he will definitely reveal his identity to Huang Xiaoyong when begging for his life. That way, it will even save us

the effort of finding out the truth ourselves,”
Chen Yanran explained.

The maid had an epiphany and replied, “Ms.
Chen, you’re really wise!”



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The moment he stepped out of the Chen residence, Han Jingru noticed that he was being followed by more than ten men. It was obvious that Huang Xiaoyong really hated his guts to have sent so many men after him.

However, considering that Huang Xiaoyong was the governor's son, it shouldn't have been difficult to recruit this many lackeys for the job.

Han Jingru strolled along the main street on purpose. All the men did was follow him in the shadows as they didn't dare to stop him. It seemed as though they were afraid of causing a commotion in public.

Realizing their intentions, Han Jingru headed toward the city gates on purpose.

“Young Master, that piece of trash is heading toward the city gates. It looks like he wants to leave the city,” Huang Xiaoyong's subordinates informed him immediately.

Caught by surprise, Huang Xiaoyong was puzzled as he asked, “Doesn't he know that I'm

going to attack him? Why is he heading out of the city?"

"Young Master, perhaps he is stupid. From his looks, he doesn't seem to be very bright," the subordinate replied.

Huang Xiaoyong sneered, "He is presenting me with a wonderful opportunity. It seems like he is not going to survive, after all. I want to personally see how he looks like, given that Chen Yanran was willing to marry him."

Han Jingru was obviously not an idiot, and his schemes were beyond what an ordinary person could fathom. He was actually giving Huang Xiaoyong an opportunity on purpose. He knew that he couldn't avoid the trouble posed by the latter. Hence, he decided to deal with it head-on instead.

Furthermore, Han Jingru had another reason for doing so. As Huang Xiaoyong was the governor's son, he would be extremely useful to Han Jingru. With his help behind the scenes, Han Jingru could wield significant influence within Longyun

City, and that would make his search for Jiang Yingying a lot easier.

Of course, it went without saying that Jiang Yingying had to be in Longyun City for his plan to work:

Every time he thought about the matter, he would be worried sick. It wasn't an issue for him to have been unconscious for such a long time. But Jiang Yingying was a lady. If she met someone with ill intentions, the consequences would be terrifying.

After leaving the city, Han Jingru kept off the main road. Instead, he headed toward the wilderness. With no one around, it would allow Huang Xiaoyong to show himself.

However, after walking for half an hour, Huang Xiaoyong had still yet to appear. Finally, Han Jingru lost his patience and stopped walking. He yelled, "I've already given you the opportunity, so why are you still hiding? What are you waiting for?"

Just as he spoke, the men hiding in the shadows emerged. Huang Xiaoyong was standing in front of them. He looked massive with his bulging muscles, similar to that of Qi Hu. His appearance alone was enough to strike fear into his enemies.

“Are you Han Jingru?” Huang Xiaoyong asked.

“Isn’t it obvious?” Han Jingru replied in a flat tone.

Huang Xiaoyong scoffed, “Don’t get cocky. Are you even aware of the situation you’re in?”

“Of course. I already have you surrounded,” Han Jingru replied with a smile.

Surrounded?

Huang Xiaoyong panicked for a moment and frantically scanned his surroundings.

No wonder he chose to leave the city and lead us to such a secluded location. It seems that he has it all planned out.

“Don’t misunderstand. What I mean is that I alone have all of you surrounded. There’s no one else to help me.” Han Jingru couldn’t help but laugh when he saw Huang Xiaoyong’s nervous expression. *Why does the governor’s son look like a total idiot?*

After being stunned briefly, Huang Xiaoyong burst into laughter.

“How can you surround us alone? Han Jingru, you’re a fool,” Huang Xiaoyong laughed as he ridiculed him.

“What? Do you think it’s not enough?” Han Jingru retorted.

“Hahaha!” Huang Xiaoyong laughed even harder after hearing his reply. Even his subordinates joined in and laughed at Han Jingru mockingly.

From their perspective, Han Jingru’s words sounded idiotic. *How can he alone surround more than ten men? Is it some kind of bad joke?*

“You’re so funny! You’re just killing me with

your sense of humor. Han Jingru, I didn't expect you to be such an idiot," Huang Xiaoyong remarked.

Han Jingru shrugged his shoulders as if he didn't care. Then, he replied, "Huang Xiaoyong, Chen Yanran and I are just married in name. In fact, this whole thing is still a mystery to me. Therefore, both of us shouldn't be enemies."

"I know. Chen Yanran is just using you as a front. There's no way she would let you have her. Nevertheless, I still have to kill you because she must know that only I deserve to marry her," Huang Xiaoyong declared.

"It appears that there's no more room for discussion?" Han Jingru asked.

"You must die," Huang Xiaoyong hissed through his gritted teeth.

Han Jingru sighed when he realized there was no other way to resolve their impasse. Since he was left without a choice, he would have to demonstrate how he alone could surround all of

them.

“When you start regretting it, remember to beg for mercy earlier. Or else, I’m worried you might not even get the chance to do so,” Han Jingru warned.

“Haha, you’re such a joker. All of my subordinates are formidable fighters as they belong to the Second Stage. You should start thinking about how you would like to die.” At the wave of Huang Xiaoyong’s hand, his subordinates charged forward.

He actually called Second Stage fighters formidable?

Their strength was probably below that of a Silver rank fighter. Even if Han Jingru wanted to show them some respect, they didn’t deserve it at all.

“I’ll show you the real definition of formidable.” The corner of Han Jingru’s lip curled into a smirk. Before the men could get any closer, he dashed forward to attack.

Huang Xiaoyong assumed that there was no way for a good-for-nothing like Han Jingru to escape from his ambush. In Longyun City, the only person who commanded so many Second Stage fighters was the governor himself. For this same reason, the governor was able to free himself from the yoke of the Three Major Families. By doing so, he was no longer their puppet.

In Xenos, power was a determining factor of one's status. However, status doesn't necessarily translate into power. Therefore, when high-ranking officials met powerful characters, they would also accord them the necessary respect. Just like in Apocalypse, power determined one's place in the hierarchy.

As Han Jingru charged deep into the circle that formed around him, he started sending his enemies flying with every punch he threw. When faced with Second Stage fighters, all Han Jingru needed was one move to neutralize them.

When he saw his men falling like flies in front of him, Huang Xiaoyong gaped in shock.

“Young Master, t-this guy is extremely strong! Despite being surrounded by so many Second Stage fighters, he has managed to gain the upper hand,” Huang Xiaoyong’s subordinates frantically reported to him.

Huang Xiaoyong was dumbfounded. The only reason he dared to act with such impunity was because of the Second Stage fighters. But in front of Han Jingru, they were just like butter being sliced through by a knife, unable to put up any resistance.

“What’s going on? How is this possible?” Huang Xiaoyong screamed in disbelief as reality unfolded before him.

Soon, every single one of them was lying on the ground, proving Han Jingru’s point about surrounding them.

“So, are you regretting it now?”

Hearing Han Jingru's words, Huang Xiaoyong regained his composure. Meanwhile, his followers' knees buckled in fear, causing them to collapse onto the ground.

“You... Who in the world are you?” When Huang Xiaoyong saw Han Jingru approach him, he retreated in fear.

From Huang Xiaoyong's perspective, Han Jingru's decision to leave the Chen residence and come to the outskirts was suicidal. In fact, he even thought that Han Jingru was a fool. But now, he clearly understood why Han Jingru did so. The man assumed by everyone to be useless was far from it. To be able to take down more than ten Second Stage fighters in such a short time meant that he was at least as strong as a Fourth Stage fighter.

Fourth Stage!

Given how rare it was to find a fighter in Longyun City, it wasn't an exaggeration to say that Han Jingru was the strongest fighter in the city.

“Me? I’m called Han Jingru, and I’m Chen Yanran’s husband. How can you forget about that in such a short time?” Han Jingru answered with a chuckle.

Huang Xiaoyong cleared his throat. Obviously, he knew who Han Jingru was on the surface. What he really wanted to know was the secret identity Han Jingru was hiding beneath the facade.

“Since you are so powerful, why did you marry Chen Yanran? Why are you even here at Longyun City?” Huang Xiaoyong inquired out of curiosity.

“Do you really want to know?” Han Jingru asked.

Huang Xiaoyong nodded eagerly.

“I don’t mind telling you if you really want to know, but as for the others...” Han Jingru stopped mid-sentence on purpose.

Stunned briefly, Huang Xiaoyong quickly read between the lines. However, he was reluctant to

act according to Han Jingru's request. After all, the Second Stage fighters were his family's counterbalance against the power of the Three Major Families. If all of them died, the governor would lose his ability to counter their influence.

"If you are willing to obey me, I will take you in as my disciple," Han Jingru continued when he saw that Huang Xiaoyong was hesitating.

Take me in as a disciple?

Huang Xiaoyong's eyes lit up. He surmised that Han Jingru was at least as powerful as a Fourth Stage fighter. In fact, he might even be more powerful than that. Hence, it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for him to be taught by such an illustrious master.

After all, it would be better for him to be strong than rely on his subordinates.

"Sure!" Huang Xiaoyong made his decision.

All the Second Stage fighters were grievously injured and no longer had the strength to defend

themselves, so even he could defeat them.

As Han Jingru turned his back on them, all he heard were cries of agony.

Huang Xiaoyong knew that Han Jingru wanted to keep his identity a secret, so he killed everyone, including his closest subordinates.

Once the deed was done, Huang Xiaoyong approached Han Jingru respectfully and bowed.

Although he used to hate Han Jingru for stealing the one he loved, he had now chosen power over a woman. After all, the former was a lot more tempting.

Despite being a simple-minded brute, Huang Xiaoyong still understood what was fundamentally more important. If he were able to gain more power, more pretty ladies would be attracted to him.

“You don’t have to know my identity. As for how powerful I am, it will be too much for you to wrap your head around. So, let’s put that aside for

the moment. Whatever happened today has to be kept a secret. Even your father is not allowed to know about it. If you dare reveal my secret, the governor's residence will be bathed in blood," Han Jingru explained.

Huang Xiaoyong nodded resolutely as he believed Han Jingru's words without a doubt. In the face of such power, the governor's family was nothing.

"Master, based on protocol, I will need to serve you tea," Huang Xiaoyong suggested.

"We can dispense with that." Han Jingru turned around and took out a red fruit. "Eat this."

"Master, what's this?" Huang Xiaoyong asked out of curiosity.

Han Jingru had no idea what it was either. All he knew was that it would increase the power and strength of whoever consumed it.

Actually, the red fruit could also be found in Xenos, but not many came across it because of its

habitat. One had to be at least a Seventh Stage fighter to be able to get there. Moreover, one might not necessarily be able to find the red fruit.

It had a very peculiar name, the Holy Chestnut. In Xenos, legend had it that all the strongest Pinnacle Masters had to consume the Holy Chestnut to achieve their strength. Therefore, the Holy Chestnut was considered invaluable in Xenos.

The act of Han Jingru giving out the Holy Chestnut casually would be considered extremely generous by any fighter who knew of its value.

After accepting it, Huang Xiaoyong put it in his mouth. It tasted sweet and was extremely juicy. He couldn't help but praise how delicious it was.

Han Jingru reminded him, "For the time being, keep our relationship a secret. You should continue to treat me as your enemy in front of others. Make sure you don't spill the beans accidentally."

Huang Xiaoyong nodded repeatedly and treated

Han Jingru's words as gospel.

"Alright then, you should head back to the city," Han Jingru instructed.

"Master, you should leave first. It would be rude of me to go ahead of you," Huang Xiaoyong suggested.

Han Jingru kicked Huang Xiaoyong in his ass and insisted, "Just go quickly when I tell you to and stop wasting time."

Huang Xiaoyong grimaced in pain as he rubbed his backside. Left without a choice, he obeyed Han Jingru and went off.

Watching Huang Xiaoyong leave, Han Jingru knew that he wouldn't trust him easily. But he was confident that when Huang Xiaoyong awoke tomorrow and realized that he had gotten stronger, all his doubts would be put to rest. Han Jingru felt that it was invaluable to have such a powerful pawn in Longyun City.

News of Huang Xiaoyong returning to the city

traveled to the Three Major Families instantly.

“Ms. Chen, Huang Xiaoyong has returned, but there’s no sign of Han Jingru. I’m a-afraid that he might be dead,” the maid rushed to inform Chen Yanran of the news the moment she heard it.

Chen Yanran was not surprised at all. After all, Huang Xiaoyong had led more than ten Second Stage fighters to ambush Han Jingru outside the city. There was no way Han Jingru would come back alive.

“He ignored our advice, so he can’t blame anyone. Furthermore, it doesn’t seem that he is part of any prominent family. Or else, he wouldn’t have died at the hands of Huang Xiaoyong,” Chen Yanran commented.

“Ms. Chen, so should we just leave the matter be?” the maid asked.

“What else do you suggest? Do you want me to exact revenge on Huang Xiaoyong over that piece of trash? Whether he lives or dies has nothing to do with me. After all, I have achieved

my objective. Now that he is dead, I will have to mourn for three years. During these three years, Huang Xiaoyong will not dare harass me,” Chen Yanran explained.

The maid nodded. *Han Jingru doesn't deserve any pity for dying. It's his own fault for being weak.*

At the same time, the other two prominent families received the news. The patriarchs of both families were delighted to hear of Han Jingru's death. However, their joy was short-lived.

Not long after Huang Xiaoyong returned to the city, Han Jingru was seen strolling through the city gates unscathed.



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“How is that possible? Why is he alive?”

When the Wang family patriarch heard about the news, he was filled with shock.

Everyone in Longyun City knew how much Huang Xiaoyong hated Han Jingru. His obsession with Chen Yanran was well known to all. When he heard that Han Jingru had married her, he even killed some of his own servants in anger. Therefore, it was impossible for him to let Han Jingru live.

“Is the information reliable? Did you see the wrong person?” the patriarch questioned his servant.

“Sir, we definitely did not make a mistake. It really was Han Jingru,” the servant replied.

The patriarch took a deep breath and said, “I wonder what happened? Why did Huang Xiaoyong not kill him?”

At the same time, the same scene was unfolding within the Xie family.

After the Xie family patriarch heard the news, he too assumed that his servant had made a mistake. However, after verifying it three times, he was puzzled to realize that it was undoubtedly Han Jingru.

“Sir, something really strange has happened,” the servant suggested.

“What’s strange about it? Tell me quickly,” the patriarch badgered.

“Huang Xiaoyong returned to the city alone. When he left, he had brought along more than ten Second Stage fighters. But now, they are nowhere to be seen,” the servant explained.

“That’s right. Where have they gone?” the patriarch asked.

“Sir, could it be that Han Jingru killed them?” the servant speculated.

The patriarch waved his hand without hesitation and asserted, “Impossible. How could that piece of trash have killed more than ten Second Stage

fighters?”

“Could it be that Huang Xiaoyong wasn’t going after Han Jingru and had sent his men on another mission instead?” the servant continued to guess.

The patriarch felt this theory to be more believable. However, he was curious as to what Huang Xiaoyong was up to, given that he wasn’t very bright.

“It seems Huang Houyi might have something up his sleeves. That puppet has long been aware of our dissatisfaction with him. Perhaps he is taking the initiative to strike at us first.” After giving it some thought, the patriarch ordered with a stern tone, “From now on, tighten the security around the house. We mustn’t let anyone in.”

At the Chen residence.

When Chen Yanran heard the news, her eyes widened in shock at the bizarre turn of events. Being directly involved, she knew firsthand how obsessed Huang Xiaoyong was with her. Han Jingru’s marriage to her had caused Huang

Xiaoyong to hate him with all his guts. That was why Chen Yanran was puzzled by the fact that he missed such a wonderful opportunity to exact revenge.

“Ms. Chen, there is something else amiss other than Han Jingru returning alive. The Second Stage fighters whom Huang Xiaoyong brought with him have disappeared as if they vanished into thin air,” the maid informed Chen Yanran.

Chen Yanran’s heart raced upon hearing the maid’s words. The only explanation for such a scenario was that Han Jingru killed all of them, regardless of how ridiculous it sounded.

But is that possible?

Is this piece of trash really capable of killing more than ten Second Stage fighters?

Suddenly, Chen Yanran recalled the earlier incident where the Fourth Stage fighter left mysteriously. *Don’t tell me Han Jingru was telling the truth when he claimed to have killed the Fourth Stage fighter?*

Subconsciously, Chen Yanran's breathing quickened. If that were true, she would have come upon someone powerful by chance.

However, given that there wasn't any evidence to support her assumption, she refused to believe it.

"Ms. Chen, Han Jingru is back," another maid rushed into Chen Yanran's room to inform her.

Upon hearing that, Chen Yanran quickly stood up and left her room.

Having returned to his room, Han Jingru was preparing to lie down and rest when Chen Yanran entered.

Han Jingru wasn't surprised at all. In fact, he was anticipating it.

"Did something important happen? You seem to be in a hurry to see me," Han Jingru asked.

"How did you come back alive?" Chen Yanran asked.

“Chen Yanran, in spite of everything, I’m still your husband in name. Do you really want me dead that badly?” Han Jingru answered with a smirk.

“Huang Xiaoyong led more than ten Second Stage fighters out of the city. Under those circumstances, how is it possible that you returned alive?” Chen Yanran continued with an aggressive tone. Ignoring his earlier question, she desperately wanted to know the answer.

“I know Huang Xiaoyong is the governor’s son, but I have not seen him before. Does he want to kill me?” Han Jingru played dumb on purpose.

Chen Yanran narrowed her eyes as she could see through Han Jingru’s act. She knew it was impossible for him not to know that Huang Xiaoyong wanted him dead. Moreover, the maid had warned him about it before he left the Chen residence. Therefore, Chen Yanran was not fooled at all.

“Han Jingru, don’t take me for an idiot.” Chen Yanran was so angry that she was on the brink of

going ballistic.

However, Han Jingru maintained his nonchalant attitude and replied, “I’m sure you’re aware that I would be dead if I really met Huang Xiaoyong. Since I came back alive, it can only mean he wasn’t looking for me. Chen Yanran, you’re a smart woman, but why can’t you understand something as simple as this?”

How is it possible they didn’t encounter each other, given that they left the city one after the other?

Chen Yanran wasn’t a fool, and she could see the inconsistencies in his explanation. She was sure that something must have happened that she wasn’t aware of.

“Did you kill all those Second Stage fighters?” Chen Yanran finally asked the burning question she had. That was the main reason she came to see Han Jingru.

If Han Jingru was really that powerful, her original plan for him had to be utterly revamped.

Although she wouldn't fall in love with him, it was still in the Chen family's interest for them to have such a formidable fighter. Chen Yanran knew that it would bring untold benefits to them.

Han Jingru cleared his throat and replied, "Chen Yanran, if I recall correctly, I'm just a piece of trash to you. And yet, you think that I killed more than ten Second Stage fighters? Since you're willing to think so highly of me, I will gladly accept the honor. In fact, you should also believe that I killed the Fourth Stage fighter too."

Chen Yanran was exasperated at Han Jingru's words as he didn't answer her question at all.

"Han Jingru, no matter who you are, I will get to the bottom of your identity sooner or later." With that, Chen Yanran stormed out of the room, fuming.

Han Jingru chuckled. He knew that she was a domineering woman and would try her best to achieve what she wanted.

However, he wasn't the least bit worried as he

had no history in Xenos. No matter what methods Chen Yanran could come up with, she wouldn't be able to find out anything about someone who appeared out of thin air.

“She is indeed pretty, but she still can't be compared to Yimo who is much more gentle,” Han Jingru mumbled with a sigh. He couldn't help but think about Su Yimo and Han Xiang.



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